

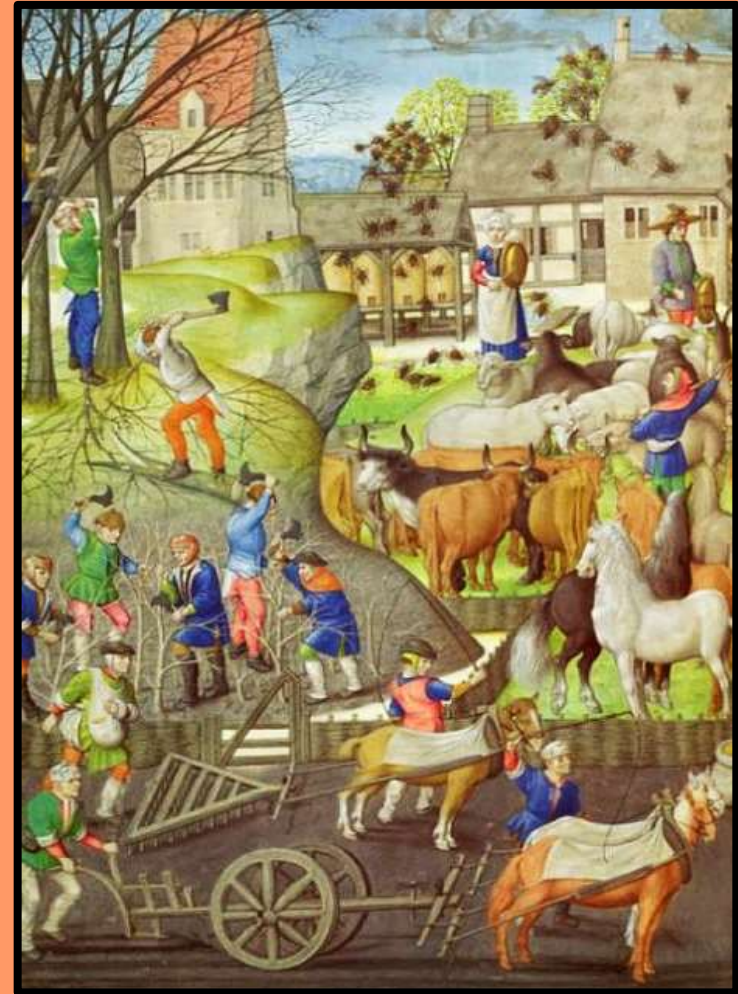
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according roughly to chronological periods

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- Tusser, Thomas, *Five hundred points of good husbandry*, (ed) Geoffrey Grigson, Harvey, G E (Oxford, 1984)

Fishergate, Fulford and Heslington Local History Society

## FOOD AND FARMING IN THE PAST: GLIMPSED IN LITERATURE AND ILLUSTRATED IN MANUSCRIPTS



## A RESOURCE PACK TO ACCOMPANY THE CONFERENCE:

**Food and Farming in Early Heslington**  
**Saturday 3 June 2023 in St Oswald's Church Hall, Fulford**

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The Front Cover illustration is from a 15<sup>th</sup> century edition of Virgil's *Georgics*, in the Holkham Hall Archives, MS 311, fo 41v.

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### Please Note:

The sources of quotations, extracts and illustrations are given on each page, as are any relevant websites. HOWEVER, none of the illustrations are to be copied, published or posted online as they require permission, as do some of the texts – and in the latter case, the compiler has obtained permission to quote the texts here but not elsewhere.

### Front Cover:

**The Georgics by Virgil (edition, Bruges, c.1500), Master of the Prayer Books (fl. C. 1460-1520), Holkham Hall & Estate, Norfolk, Ms 311, fol.41v**

[www.bridgemanimages.com/en/noartistknown/title/notechnique/asset/153066](http://www.bridgemanimages.com/en/noartistknown/title/notechnique/asset/153066)

## JOHN JAKSON OF GRIMSTON'S INVENTORY, continued

### IN THE BARN

Two bushels of barley (6d); a quarter [8 bushels] and two bushels of oats (1s 8d); two bushels of grey peas (6d); a bushel and a half of green peas (6d); two window cloths [?winnowing cloths] (1s 4d); seven vats (1s 8d); **a swarm of bees** (1s); a parcel of dung (5s); three-quarters and a half of barley, price per quarter 2s, total (7s); a parcel of unthreshed rye (5s). Total £1 4s 2d

### LIVESTOCK

A black ox (12s); two other oxen (17s); a cow with a bull calf (10s); a bullock (4s); a bullock (6s 8d); a foal aged two years (3s 4d); another bullock (4s); two pigs (2s 4d); three piglets at 6d each – total (1s 6d); a dozen pigs (3s); a breeding ewe with two lambs (1s 8d); two rams and a lamb (1s 8d); an ox for the mortuary of the deceased (1s) [?12s]. Total £3 19s 2d

### GRANARY

Three acres of wheat sown in the field, price per acre 6d (18s); three acres of sown rye there, price per acre 4s -total (12s); rent for ten acres of arable land, of which eight acres is charged at 1s 4d and two and a half at 1s – total (13s 2d) Total £2 3s 2d

TOTAL OF ALL THE GOODS OF THE DECEASED: £10 13s 1d [perhaps only £10 3s 1d]

The DEBTS OWNED TO THE DECEASED amounted to 15s 2d which were added to the total of the goods of John Jakson, **GIVING A GRAND TOTAL OF £11 8d 3d.**

The funeral expenses included a meal for the chaplains, clerks and poor men attending the obsequies and masses for the deceased on the day of his burial: bread brought for the poor (4s); beer (3s 1½d); various fish (1s 8d) and, again at the week anniversary: bread (2s); beer (2s). The bequests to his family were valued: to Alice, his daughter, 3s, the price of a blue cloak; to John is son, 5s for a jack [jacket] and 10d for a bow and arrows. To John, son of William Marschall, 1s 4d for a tunic bequeathed to him. Finally the mortuary given to the parish church was the apparently the ox valued at 12s.

However, after paying for the debts he owed (£3 7s 4½d), the bequests (£1 3s 3d), the funeral and burial expenses (17s 3½d), the funeral meal and other expenses of writing and proving the will (10s 8d) there remained **only 2s 10½d to be divided among the widow of the deceased and their three children. NOT MUCH For a man who obviously cared for his family and tried to provide for their futures.**

*Probate Inventories of the York Diocese 1350-1500* (editors) P M Stell and Louise Hampson (YAT, York, 2006), pp. 240-244 (John Jakson of Grimston).

## PROBATE INVENTORY, 1464

### JOHN JAKON, GRIMSTON, HUSBANDMAN

BIHR, Dean & Chapter of York, Original Wills, 1383-1499.

Appraised by John Studelay, John Somonddour, William Hudson of Grimston, John Bridby and William Bred, of Clyfton, husbandmen.

**CASH** 2d

#### IN THE HALL

A nate and two cushions (2d); a small board table (2d); four small stools (1d); a sallet (helmet) (1s 6d); a bow and a dozen arrows (10d); a Carlisle axe (8d); a pyke-staff (1s 8d); **two bacon flitches** (1s 8d), a passe (1d). Total: 5s 5d

#### IN THE STORE-ROOM

An aumbry [cupboard] (1s 8d); an old ark [chest] (1s 8d); another ark (1s 2d); two aumbries (6d); two meat cloths (10d); five tonnels (10d); a ladder (1d); a brass candlestick (3d); two salt-cellars (6d); two small broken chests (8d); a pelt (2d); a small board [table] (1d); a stand (1d). Total 7s 11d

#### IN THE CHAMBER

Four old and worn covers (1s 4d); two blankets (8d); a pair of linen sheets (1s); five pairs of harden [canvas] sheets (3s); eight cods [pillow cases] (1s) a board (2d); an ark (1s); a chest (2s); a doublet (5s); a cloak with a hood of blue cloth (3s); a tunic (1s 4d); another blue cloak (3s). Total £1 2s 6d

#### IN THE KITCHEN

A bronze jar (1s 8d); another bronze jar (1s 4d); another bronze jar (1s 2d); another bronze jar (10d); a dish (8d); another small dish (4d), a platter, three dishes and a tin charger [large platter] (1s 4d); an iron spit (6d); an iron rackan [ratchet for suspending a pan over the fire] (3d); a pair of iron pincers (2d); a pair of pot kilps [handles] (1d); a small lead brass (2s 2d); two small vats (9d); a stool of the same (1d)

Total 11s 4d

#### FOR HUSBANDRY

Two iron forks for dung (6d); a spade (2d); a broken old paring-spade (1d); an axe (2d); three long rapes [ropes] (6d); four tethers (4d); four iron scythes and another broken old iron scythe (2s); a turf spade (2d); four sickles (4d); an old saddle (4d); a caul [cage] (2d); six bars for a sheep fold (6d); a cart (3s 4d); a cup (3s); a plough (8d); a coulter with an iron plough share (1s); four yokes (8d); an iron teme (8d); a pair of cut withies (2d); a foot shackle (2d); a parcel of dung (2s); three wooden harrows (8d); a cock with six hens (1s). Total 19s 3d

[continued next page]

## THE GEORGICS, c. 29 BC

The *Georgics* is a poem by the Roman poet, Publius Vergilius Maro, published about 29 BC. The title, from Greek *geōrgika* mean 'of agricultural things'.

Book I, *The Invocation*, lines 1-15

I'll begin to sing of what keeps the wheat fields happy,  
under what stars to plough the earth, and fasten vines to elms,  
what care the oxen need, what tending cattle require,  
Maecenas, and how much skill's required for the thrifty bees.  
O you brightest lights of the universe  
that lead the passing year through the skies,  
Bacchus and kindly Ceres, since by your gifts  
fat wheat ears replace Chaonian acorns,  
and mixed Achelous's water with newly discovered wine,  
and you, Fauns, the farmer's local gods,  
(come dance, together, Fauns and Dryad girls!)  
Your gifts I sing. And you, O Neptune, for whom  
earth at the blow of your mighty trident first produced  
whinnying horses; and you Aristaeus, planter of the groves.,  
for whom three hundred snowy cattle graze Cea's rich thickets:

Book I, *The Treatment of the Land*, lines 71-83

Likewise alternate years let your cut fields lie fallow,  
And the idle ground harden with neglect:  
Or sow yellow corn, under another star, where you  
First harvested beans rich in their quivering pods,  
Or a crop of slender vetch, and the fragile stalks  
And rattling stems of bitter lupin. For example  
A harvest of flax exhausts the grounds, oats exhaust it,  
And poppies exhaust it, filled with Lethean sleep:  
But by rotation, the labour prospers: don't be ashamed  
To saturate the arid soil with rich dung,  
And scatter charred ashes over the weary fields.  
So with changes of crop the land can rest,  
And then the untilled earth is not ungrateful.

Quoted from *Virgil, Georgics: Book I* translated by A. S. Kline

website <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasgeorgics.php>

## JULIUS CAESAR'S DESCRIPTION OF BRITAIN, 54 BC

Caesar's *Gallic War*, Book V, extracts from sections 11, 12, 14 and 21

11. [when Caesar arrived in Britain] he found that larger British forces had now been assembled from all sides by Cassivellaunus...[whose] territory is separated from the maritime tribes by a river called the Thames, and lies about seventy-five miles from the sea...

12. "The interior of Britain is inhabited by people who claim, on the strength of an oral tradition, to be aboriginal; the coast, by Belgic immigrants who came to plunder and make war – nearly all of them retaining the name of the tribes from which they originated – and later settled down to till the soil. The population is exceedingly large, the ground **thickly studded with homesteads**, closely resembling those of the Gauls, and **the cattle vary numerous**. For money they use either bronze, or gold coins, or iron ingots of fixed weights. Tin is found inland, and small quantities of iron near the coast; the copper that they use is imported. There is **timber of every kind** as in Gaul, except beech and fir. **Hares, fowl and geese** they think it unlawful to eat, but rear them for pleasure and amusement. The climate is more temperate than in Gaul, the cold being less severe.

14. By far the most civilized inhabitants are those living in Kent...whose way of life differs little from that of the Gauls. Most of the tribes in the interior **do not grow corn but live on milk and meat, and wear skins**. All the Britons dye their bodies with woad, which produces a blue colour, and shave the whole of their bodies except the head and the upper lip.

21. [When the Romans] saw that Trinovantes had been protected against Cassivellaunus and spared any injury on the part of the Roman troops, several other tribe...sent embassies and surrendered. From them Caesar learnt that he was not far from Cassivellaunus' **stronghold, which was protected by forests and marshes and had been filled with a large number of men and cattle**. (The Britons apply the term 'strongholds' to **densely wooded spots fortified with a rampart and trench**, to which they retire in order to escape the attacks of invaders...After a short time the enemy proved unable to resist...and rushed out of the fortress on another side. A quantity of **cattle** were found there...

Caesar, *The Conquest of Gaul* (trans) by S. A. Handford (Penguin, 1951, 1982)

## PIER PLOUGHMAN'S FRUGAL FARE, c. 1370-1377

From Book VI: *Piers sets the world to work* and encounters Hunger, who helps sort out those who don't want to work by creating a vision of famine. Thinking Hunger was about to depart, Piers says,

'And now, Hunger, I know you must be anxious to go – so the best of luck, and God reward you for all you have done for me.'

Good gracious!', said Hunger, 'I'm not going yet – not until I've had a square meal and something to drink.'

'I haven't a penny left,' said Piers, 'so I can't buy you pullets or geese or pigs. All I've got is a couple of fresh cheeses, a little curds and cream, an oat-cake, and two loaves of beans and bran which I baked for my children.'

'Upon my soul, I haven't a scrap of bacon, and I haven't a cook to fry you steak and onions. But I've some parsley and shallots and plenty of cabbages, and a cow and a calf, and a mare to cart my dung, till the drought is over. And with these few things we must live till Lammas time, when I hope to reap a harvest in my fields. Then I can spread you a feast, as I'd really like to.'

Then all the poor folk came with peas-cods, and brought beans and baked apples by the lapful, and spring onions and chervils and hundreds of ripe cherries, and offered these gifts to Piers, to satisfy Hunger.

Hunger soon gobbled it all up and asked for more. So, the poor folk were afraid, and quickly brought up supplies of green leeks and peas and would gladly have poisoned him. But by that time the harvest was approaching, and new corn came to market. So, the people took comfort, and fed Hunger royally – Glutton himself couldn't wish for better ale. And so, they put him to sleep.

But once Hunger has been sated, the people return to idleness and Piers ends the book with a warning to the labours, "work while you have the chance, for Hunger is coming fast, and shall wake with the floods to deal justice on wastrels"

William Langland, *Piers the Ploughman*, translated by J F Goodridge (Penguin Books, 1959, 1978), pp. 81-90, quotations from 89, 90.

## WALTER OF BIBBESWORTH'S ADVICE, c.1230 AD

This Anglo-Norman *Treatise* was written by Walter of Bibbesworth to help an English mother, Dionisie de Anesty, teach her two young children French. Walter lived in Bibbesworth Hall, near Kimpton, Essex and Dionisie, nearby. The editor says, "Walter knew his audience. Skilfully, humorously, he keeps his readers amused as he surveys the English and French lexica of childhood, housework, farm work, fishing, baking, brewing and entertaining."

The publisher has granted permission to quote from the translated text.

Lines 326-355 "Now the French of meadows and fields and carting corn:

Now let's go to the meadows and fields to teach our children French.  
With a scythe you mow a swathe of meadow, with a sickle you reap a rip of corn.  
You tie the rips in sheaves and you put the sheaves in a truss.  
You pull up the stems of peas and you tie together the pods from the stem.  
Now I need not tell you the names of all kinds of corn,  
Of rye, barley and wheat, because they are familiar to all,  
And too many other seeds grow for me to be able to tell them all:  
Darnel grows and drawk, tare and cockle,  
Cornflower and mallow too, charlock and others I won't mention,  
Because I would have far too much to do if I had to list all the seeds for you,  
But when it's carting time you must load up your carts.  
The carter must control [your] horses with his switch.  
Rich your corn in the barn, stack your corn outside the barn.  
Because it's called a rick inside and a stack outside:  
Call it a cock when it's hay and a heap when it's grain.

Line 368 When your wheat is well threshed, then winnowed and ground

Lines 378-384 What was grain in the morning becomes meal by grinding.  
And from meal comes flour through the miller's bolting cloth.  
Because, using the bolting cloth, flour is separated from the bran that was in it.  
Give the bran to your horses. Mix warm water with the flour  
And knead your dough...[he continues with how to bake bread the French way]

*The Treatise of Walter of Bibbesworth*, translated by Andrew Dalby (Prospect Books, 2012), quotations from pages 71, 73, 75.

## ÆLFRIC'S COLLOQUY: THE PLOUGHMAN AND SHEPHERD

The manuscript dates from the **10th century** and was written by Ælfric, Abbot of Eynsham (c. 950–c. 1010). The version in the British Library is described as "as an educational text, intended to help novice monks learn Latin. The Colloquy is a dialogue between a teacher and several pupils, who practise different trades: ploughman, shepherd, hunter, fisherman, bird-catcher, merchant", etc. The teacher asks each of the pupils about what they do each day."

The following translated extract is from *The Anglo-Saxon World*, pp. 221-222:

### Ploughman

*Teacher.* What have you to say, ploughman? How do you carry on your work?

*Ploughman.* O master, I work very hard; I go out at dawn, drive the oxen to the field, and yoke them to the plough. There is no storm so severe that I dare to hide at home, for fear of my lord, but when the oxen are yoked, and the share and coulter have been fastened to the plough, I must plough a whole acre or more every day.

*Teacher.* Have you any companion?

*Ploughman.* I have a boy to urge on the oxen with a goad; he is now hoarse on account of the cold and his shouting.

*Teacher.* What else do you do during the day?

*Ploughman.* I do a good deal more. I must fill the bins of the oxen with hay, water them, and carry off their dung.

*Teacher.* Oh! Oh! The labour must be great!

*Ploughman.* It is indeed great drudgery, because I am not free.

### Shepherd

*Teacher.* What have you to say, shepherd? Have you any work?

*Shepherd.* Indeed I have. In the early morning I drive my sheep to their pasture, and in heat and cold I stand over them with dogs, lest wolves devour them. And I lead them back to their folds, and milk them twice a day; besides this, I move their folds, and make cheese and butter, and I am faithful to my lord...

British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius AIII, fo 60v-64r, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/aelfrics-colloquy>; Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Anglo-Saxon World. An Anthology* (1982, 2009), pp. 220-227.

## THE EXHIBITION – ABOUT BOOKS OF HOURS

Janet Backhouse describes the Book of Hours as “the standard book of popular devotion in western Europe during the late Middle Ages...Essentially, it contained a series of short services [in particular] the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary [which was] designed to be recited at different times of the day and night”



Hours of Catherine of Cleves, 1435-1460, Morgan Library, MS M.917/945, fo 1v-2r

“In addition...a Book of Hours usually contains a variable number of other texts and devotions. These commonly include a **CALENDAR**, showing the feasts and saints’ days throughout the year...and a typical illuminated Book of Hours is likely to include a major miniature to mark the main divisions of the text.”



The illustrations of the Little Office are usually drawn from “the narrative of the life of Mary;” and, in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves, the illustration on the opening page is an angel telling the Virgin’s father, Joachim, that his wife is with child.

Janet Backhouse, *Book of Hours* (British Library, 1985), pp 3, 4, 5;  
Hours of Catherine of Cleves, 1435-1460, Morgan Library, MS M.917/945

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janet\\_Backhouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janet_Backhouse) 1v-2r

<https://www.themorgan.org/collection/hours-of-catherine-of-cleves/14>

## THE REEVE, late 11<sup>th</sup> century

Corpus Christi College describes MS 383 as “a late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, possibly from St Paul's Cathedral in London. It contains a very early version of the Anglo-Saxon law codes...[and] contains a number of texts unique to it, such as the *Gerefa* [The Reeve]”

The following translated extract is from *The Growth of English Industry*, vol 1.

(1) The sagacious reeve ought to know both the lord’s land-right and the folk-rights, even as the counsellors of olden days have determined; and the season of every crop that pertains to a homestead; since, in many districts, the farm-work is earlier than in others; that is, ploughing-time is earlier, the season for mowing is earlier, and so likewise is the winter-pasturing, and every other kind of husbandry.

(9) In May and June and July, in summer, one may harrow, carry out manure, set up sheep-hurdles, shear sheep, build up, repair, hedge, build with timber, cut wood, week, make folds and construct a fish-weir and a mill.

(10) In harvest one may reap, in August and September and October one may mow, set woad with a dibble, gather home many crops, thatch them and cover them over, and cleanse the folds, prepare cattle-sheds and also shelters, ere too severe a winter come to the farm; and also diligently prepare the soil.

(11) In winter, one should plough, and in severe frosts cleave timber, make an orchard, and do many affairs indoors; thresh, cleave wood, put the cattle in stalls and the swine in pig-sties, set up a stove on the threshing floor – for an oven and a kiln and many things are necessary on a farm -and moreover a hen-roost.

(12) In spring one should plough and graft, sow beans, set a vine-yard, make ditches, hew wood for a wild-deer fence; and soon after that, if the weather permit, set madder, sow linseed and also woad-seed, plant a garden, and (do) many things which I cannot fully enumerate, that a good steward ought to provide.

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 383: Anglo-Saxon Laws, pages 102-107, fo. 66v-69r. <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/mv340ty8592>

W Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce: 1* (1915), appendix E Manorial Records. I. Services and Extents, here pp. 570-576

## THE MEDIEVAL CALENDAR IN VERSE

A 15<sup>th</sup> century text in the Bodleian Library preserves a poetic calendar for the months of the year (written in zigzag text boxes) and it is illustrated with an image representing the work for each month.



Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 88, fo. 097v

Many thanks to MARGARET COATS for drawing this to our attention in her online essay, *Calendar Poems for the Society of Classical Poets*.

<https://classicalpoets.org/2023/01/01/calendar-poems-an-essay-by-margaret-coats>

**Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 88, fo. 097v.** MS Digby 88 is a collection of theological notes, astronomical texts, medical and scientific texts, and prognostications. It was given to the Bodleian in 1634 by Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1655), an English courtier and diplomat. [https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_4428](https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4428)

## THE EXHIBITION – ABOUT THE LABOURS OF THE MONTHS

Janet Backhouse continues, “Books of Hours in most cases open with a calendar, recording the fixed feasts of the liturgical year and the anniversaries of important saints...From very early times calendar pages in all kinds of books were ornamented with miniatures, usually portraying the signs of the **zodiac** and the occupations of the months” widely known as **The Labours of the Month**.



Da Costa Hours, 1515, Morgan Library, MS M.399, fo 9v-10r (August & Virgo)

In the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, “book painters in **Flanders dominated the market...and the leading studio of the day was that of Simon Bening.**”

**The images in this exhibition are taken from two books of hours attributed to his workshop: the Da Costa Hours and the ‘Golf’ Book of Hours.**

The Da Costa Hours, made for a Portuguese family, came to Alvara da Costa, the king’s armorer. The ‘Golf Book’ takes its name from the marginal illustration for September. They are now in the Morgan and British Libraries.



The Golf Book (BL Add. MS 24098), fo 27r

<https://www.themorgan.org/collection/da-costa-hours>  
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-golf-book>

## LES DOUZE TRAVAUX DES MOIS

Pietro de Crescenzi (1230-c.1320), *Ruralia Commoda* (French, c.1460), Illuminator, Master of the Boccaccio of Geneva, anonymous translator



**Top Row:** January, digging clay?; February, spreading manure;  
**Middle Row** May, hunting with falcons; June, mowing hay  
**Bottom Row** September, sowing seed; October, making wine

**March,** pruning vines;  
**July,** harvesting wheat  
**November,** feeding pigs

**April,** shearing sheep  
**August,** threshing grain  
**December,** slaughtering the pig

France, Chantilly, Musée Condé, Bibliothèque, Ms. 340/603, fo. 93

<https://portail.biblissima.fr/fr/ark:/43093/ifa436490168dee96f7418f878031e9528cf402b105>